(c) if so, what steps are being taken to ensure the quality and schedule of modernization;

(d) whether it is a fact that the French manufacturers have sought to substantially increase the price of spares/repairs over and above the original terms of agreement;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) whether the aircrafts can be manufactured and modernized under licence within the country?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) The French Original Equipment Manufacturers have informed that they were closing down the production line of Mirage-2000 aircraft.

(b) and (c) Proposal for upgradation of Mirage-2000 aircraft is under discussion with the French side and it has yet to be finalized. Though the production line is being shut down, the French side have assured continued product support for the upgraded aircraft.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) Repair and Overhaul facilities for airframe and engine of Mirage 2000 aircraft are set up in India. However, some spares are sourced from Original Equipment Manufacturers abroad and repairs of select items is also carried out in France. The issues relating to procurement of spares and product support system are being discussed and negotiated with the French.

(f) There is no proposal to manufacture the aircraft under license within the country.

Imposition of Army Act on BRO

2341. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) when was Army Act imposed on BRO and why;

(b) whether BRO persons were provided free ration at par with Army right from the beginning;

(c) if not, after how many years ration has been equalized;

(d) whether clothing similar to Army was provided to GREF/BRO personnel working in tough terrains; and

(e) if so, whether all the GREF/BRO personnel are provided all items in time without any lapse?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) Army Act has been made applicable to Border Roads Organization since 23rd September, 1960, because General Reserve Engineer Force has been designed and set up by the Government of India to meet the requirement of roads of operational and strategic importance for the Army.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) GREF personnel have been granted Army scale of ration after 42 years of inception for the Organization *i.e.* from 29th January, 2003 which is further subject to the following conditions:.

(i) When they are engaged on the work alongside the Army.

(ii) Or ahead of the Army on International Border.

(iii) Or the line of actual control.

(iv) Or under operational control of the Army.

(v) Or on Counter Insurgency and anti insurgency operation alongside the Army in Border areas and disturbed areas.

BRO personnel who do not fulfil the above conditions, are authorized GREF scale of ration which is comparatively less.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) Yes, Sir.

Slow pace of modernization of special forces

2342. MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is concerned over the slow pace of modernization of the elite special forces;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether the slow pace is bound to affect the long term projects of the special forces?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) A plan for modernization of Special Forces for equipping them with modern weapons and equipment is already underway. The long term projects are not affected and the required procurement as part of long term modernization plan will continue to progress as per the extant Defence Procurement Procedure.

Joining of private sector by DRDO scientists

†2343. SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of the qualified scientists from the Defence Research and Development Organisation have joined private companies so far after resigning from DRDO;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.